

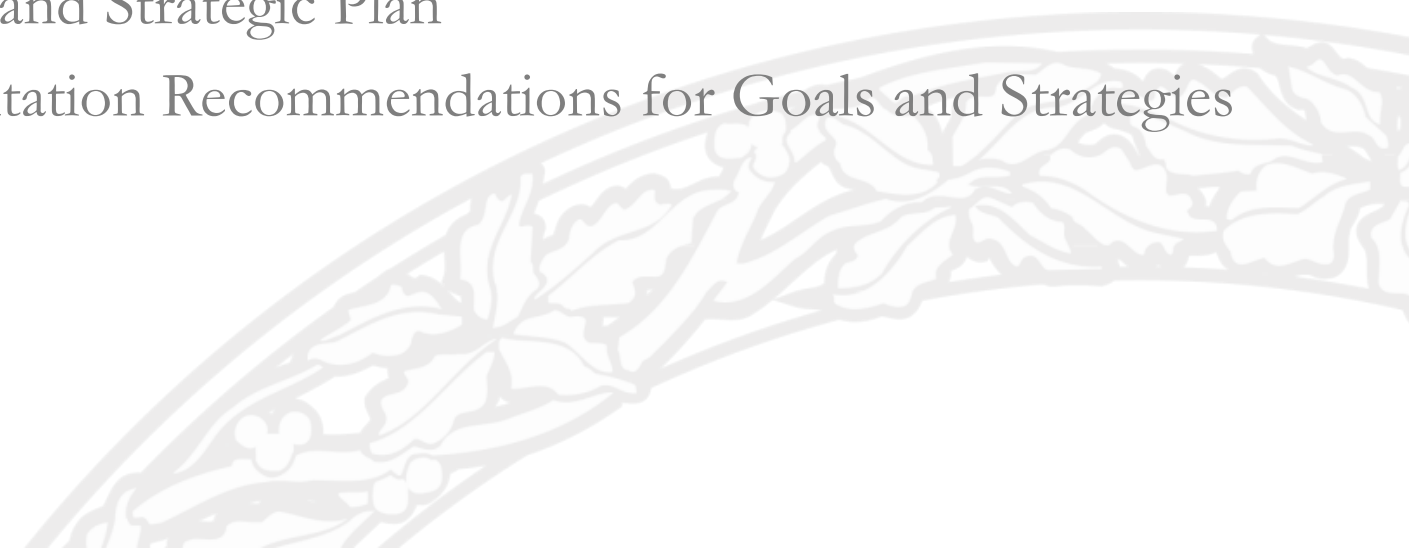


# Children's Cabinet Workgroup: Early Childhood Development and School Readiness

July 17, 2019 11:00 AM – 12:30 PM

## Agenda

Objective: To review recent progress and develop set of considerations and/or recommendations for Children's Cabinet on goals and strategies

1. Check In and Welcome from the First Lady of Virginia
  2. Update on Governor's Cabinet Briefing and Agency Efforts
  3. Update on Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan
  4. Working Session on Implementation Recommendations for Goals and Strategies
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## Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five

Virginia is implementing the \$9.9m PDG B-5 grant, focused on 3 key activities:

1. A statewide vision, needs assessment and strategic plan  
*Process and materials will be catalyst for strengthening the early childhood care and education system to improve outcomes including school readiness.*
2. Community models ready to scale  
*Eleven early adopter communities, representing Virginia's diversity, will demonstrate proof of concept with \$6 million in funding and support from state, including \$4 million in recognition grants for teachers.*
3. A stronger foundation at the state level  
*The Commonwealth will be well positioned to scale the efforts statewide, having built the necessary capacity and infrastructure.*

### Highlights:

- State has nearly completed needs assessment and planning process, including data analysis, interviews, focus group, workgroup, School Readiness Committee retreat and internal review.
- 11 regions/communities are participating, representing than 604 sites and 3,617 teachers
- State is building infrastructure including a proof of concept data portal

## Statewide Strategic Plan and Needs Assessment

PDG B-5 requires Virginia to produce a statewide needs assessment and strategic plan that will address the following key questions:

Needs Assessment	Strategic Plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ To what extent are Virginia's publicly funded early childhood care and education (ECCE) programs serving families in Virginia with children ages 0 to 5?</li><li>■ What are the strengths and weaknesses of Virginia's infrastructure supporting publicly-funded ECCE programs?</li><li>■ What data do policymakers, state agency executive leadership, early childhood program providers, and families need to make informed decisions about early childhood programs and infrastructure? To what extent is that data available in Virginia?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ What actions would enable Virginia's publicly funded ECCE programs to better prepare all Virginia's children, especially those from under-resourced communities, for kindergarten?</li><li>■ What changes to ECCE infrastructure would better enable all of Virginia's children ages 0 to 5, especially those from under-resourced communities, to access to publicly-funded ECCE programs that help prepare children for kindergarten?</li><li>■ What measures should be used demonstrate progress and foster accountability for above actions/changes?</li><li>■ What can we learn from Virginia's mixed delivery pilots' experience regarding what works well and where there are barriers?</li></ul>

## Work to Date

- A Virginia consulting firm, Communitas Consulting, is leading planning and engagement work through the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation and is being advised by the Impact Workgroup, a workgroup of the School Readiness Committee:

### COMPLETE

#### Needs Assessment

- ✓ Data scan
- ✓ Review of Virginia reports, 2014-2019
- ✓ Focus groups of educators
- ✓ Interviews with caretakers and local community leaders
- ✓ Research on facilities and financing
- ✓ First draft of needs assessment

#### Strategic Plan

- ✓ Mixed delivery focus group
- ✓ Environmental scans
- ✓ Synopsis of Smart Beginnings plans
- ✓ Statewide stakeholder interviews
- ✓ Three meetings of the Impact Work Group
- ✓ School Readiness Committee Retreat

### UNDERWAY

- ✓ Writing the needs assessment report and strategic plan

- Communitas has completed final draft of needs assessment which is under state agency review and plans to seek additional feedback on goals and strategies in upcoming month in order to complete strategic plan.



## Summary of Needs Assessment

- Virginia's needs assessment combines:
  1. Findings of recent state and national reports on ECCE
  2. Administrative and demographic data from federal and state databases
  3. Interviews with families of young children, community leaders, and other early childhood stakeholders
  4. Focus groups with child care center directors, educators, and child care providers.
- The document addresses three angles:
  1. Who are the children? The report describes the young children and families in Virginia households. It identifies strengths and gaps.
  2. What are the public resources? The report reviews the statewide public offerings for early childhood care and education, their accessibility and quality, and additional support services and resources that improve healthy child development.
  3. What is the system for public ECCE? Bringing resources and needs together, the report describes the level of coordination and oversight within Virginia, and how early childhood care and education is financed, monitored, and staffed.
- Document concludes with set of opportunities to help identify areas of focus for the strategic plan.

## Needs Assessment Findings: Virginia's Children

- Altogether, 40% of Virginia's kindergarten students (and 48% of economically disadvantaged children) enter school unprepared in at least one area.
- As of 2017, an estimated 509,922 children under age five live in Virginia. Of those:
  - 60,297 (12%) live in rural areas
  - 182,325 (36%) live in low-income households
  - 339,770 (67%) live in households where all available parents are employed
- 33,699 children (about 7%) have been identified as needing support for disabilities or delays and have received it through Early Intervention or Early Childhood Special Education.
- Roughly 13% of children age 5-17 in public schools are considered English language learners.
- It is estimated that Virginia's population will continue to diversify and grow. The number of children under age five is projected to grow by 9% between 2020 and 2030, primarily in urban and suburban communities, to reach more than 540,000 by 2020 and 590,000 by 2030. At the same time, Virginia's Asian population will expand by 44% and its Hispanic population by 51%.
- Virginia's early childhood system is facing increased capacity demands and as well as enhanced cultural, linguistic, and ethnic diversity among its youngest residents.



## Needs Assessment Findings: Resources and System

- Awareness of the importance of investing in children before they reach kindergarten has grown.
- Virginia's supports for early childhood are targeted to its most vulnerable, particularly in terms of economic instability. They include quality, accessible ECCE and support for appropriate development, nutrition, and language acquisition for children.
- Yet Virginia's approach remains "extremely diffuse" with "no single governance structure or authority charged with implementing early childhood priorities." As such, Virginia's lack of coordinated attention to quality, financing, governance, and policy infrastructure do not adequately reflect the Commonwealth's desired commitment to supporting early childhood, as it has been expressed in recent reports and plans.
- Significant public and private efforts across Virginia are dedicated to supporting children under five, yet the lack of a unified state approach has resulted in fragmentation and gaps in service that hinder support for families.
- These significant gaps in access and quality result in needs related to infants and toddlers, child care deserts, rural areas, working families and addressing the complex needs of the most underserved populations.



## Draft Vision and Principles

- **Vision:** All children in the Commonwealth of Virginia will thrive with the support of accessible, quality, and affordable early care and education delivered in safe and nurturing environments.
- **Principles:**
  1. **Equitable.** All children have access to opportunities in inclusive schools, centers, and homes that provide the care and education they need, regardless of age, income, ethnicity, race, zip code, or ability.
  2. **Family Focused.** Families are engaged in guiding the policies and practices of early care and education, and programs and policy makers are accountable to families.
  3. **High Quality.** Children are supported in their development and learning in safe, high quality environments by a skilled workforce receiving competitive wages and professional supports.
  4. **Strategic.** Funding, policies, shared data, and standards are coordinated among programs, agencies, and schools to better invest in and serve children and their families.
  5. **Innovative.** Incubation, testing, and scaling of successful initiatives and policies are supported and result in effective practices.

## Draft Goals

The Impact Workgroup and School Readiness Committee has developed draft five overarching goals, each with a set of underlying strategies.

1. **Equitable Access.** Expand accessibility of quality public and private early childhood care and education to reach vulnerable children and better prepare Virginia's future workforce.
2. **Family Engagement.** Increase the capacity of early care and education providers to engage and support families to foster children's healthy development, learning, and well-being.
3. **Workforce (Quality).** Support the early childhood care and education workforce to develop career pathways, continuously improve, and meet unified standards of quality.
4. **Accountability.** Align and unify responsibility for establishing standards, coordinating services, and improving outcomes for children age 0-5, in partnership with local communities.
5. **Local Capacity and Innovation.** Engage local and regional public and private stakeholders in designing, piloting, and scaling a more accessible and high quality system that meets community needs.



## Draft Goal 1: Equitable Access

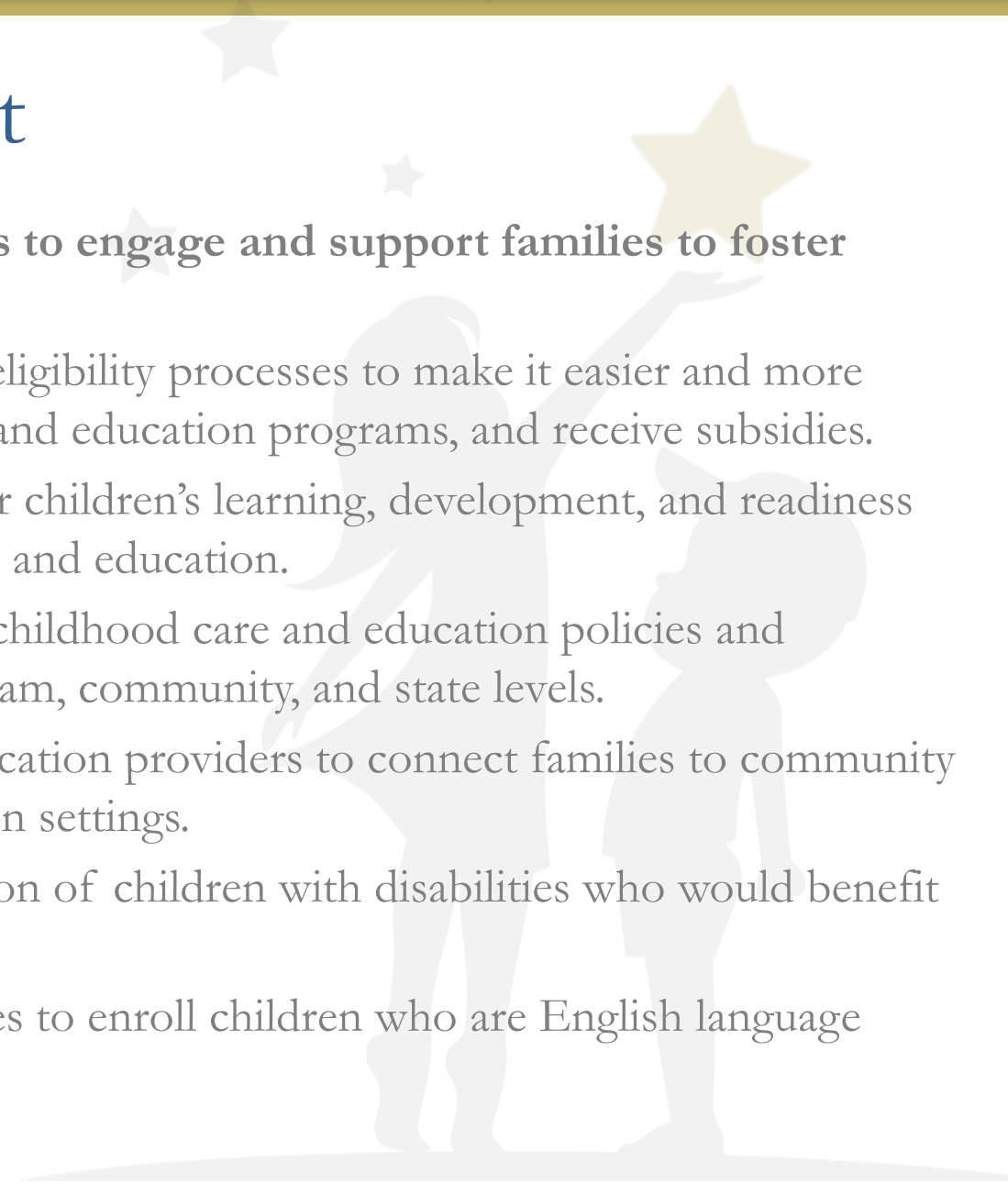
**Expand accessibility of quality public and private early childhood care and education to reach vulnerable children and better prepare Virginia's future workforce.**

- 1.1 Increase access to information on available publicly-funded opportunities and seats for children age 0-5 to families and policy makers.
- 1.2 Provide financial and operational support to underserved communities to increase high quality, accessible ECCE options.
- 1.3 Adopt state financing regulations and policies that support coordination of funding and innovative financing mechanisms that cover the real costs of care and maximize use of funds for providers.
- 1.4 Increase the number and availability of affordable, flexible, quality public and private opportunities to meet the needs of working parents, including full-day/after care/nontraditional hours as well as infant and toddler care.

## Draft Goal 2: Family Engagement

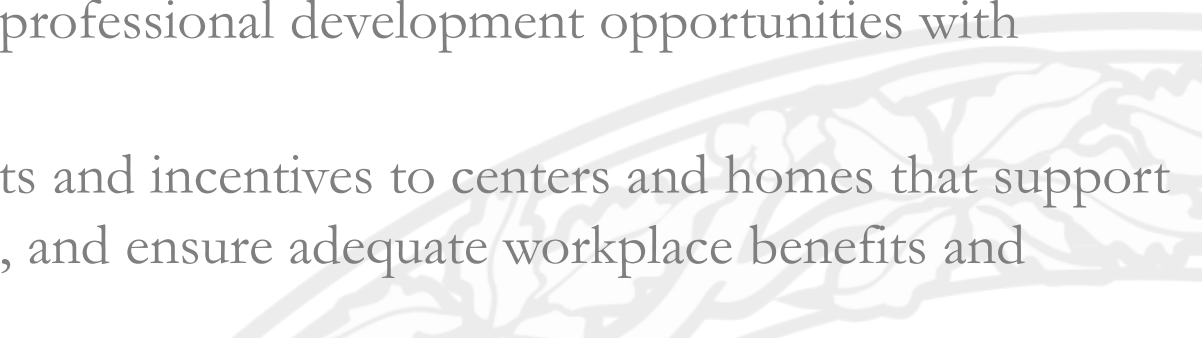
**Increase the capacity of early care and education providers to engage and support families to foster children's healthy development, learning, and well-being.**

- 2.1 Better coordinate local recruitment, enrollment, and eligibility processes to make it easier and more affordable for families in need to enroll in public early care and education programs, and receive subsidies.
- 2.2 Target resources to support parents in advancing their children's learning, development, and readiness for school, and understanding the value of quality early care and education.
- 2.3 Increase the engagement of families in guiding early childhood care and education policies and developing welcoming and responsive practices at the program, community, and state levels.
- 2.4 Increase the capacity of early childhood care and education providers to connect families to community resources that help children thrive in early care and education settings.
- 2.5 Increase timely identification, enrollment, and retention of children with disabilities who would benefit from early assistance in publicly-supported programs.
- 2.6 Expand outreach and enrollment in multiple languages to enroll children who are English language learners.



## Draft Goal 3: Workforce (Quality)

**Support the early childhood care and education workforce to develop career pathways, continuously improve, and meet unified standards of quality.**

- 3.1 Adopt and articulate statewide indicators that measure multiple dimensions of children's development from 0-5 in early care and education settings.
  - 3.2 Implement and bring to scale a uniform, statewide classroom quality measurement and improvement tool for all programs receiving public funding.
  - 3.3 Align recruitment, preparation, and professional development opportunities with statewide quality measures.
  - 3.4 Employ performance-based contracts and incentives to centers and homes that support sustainable operations, reward quality care, and ensure adequate workplace benefits and conditions.
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## Draft Goal 4: Accountability

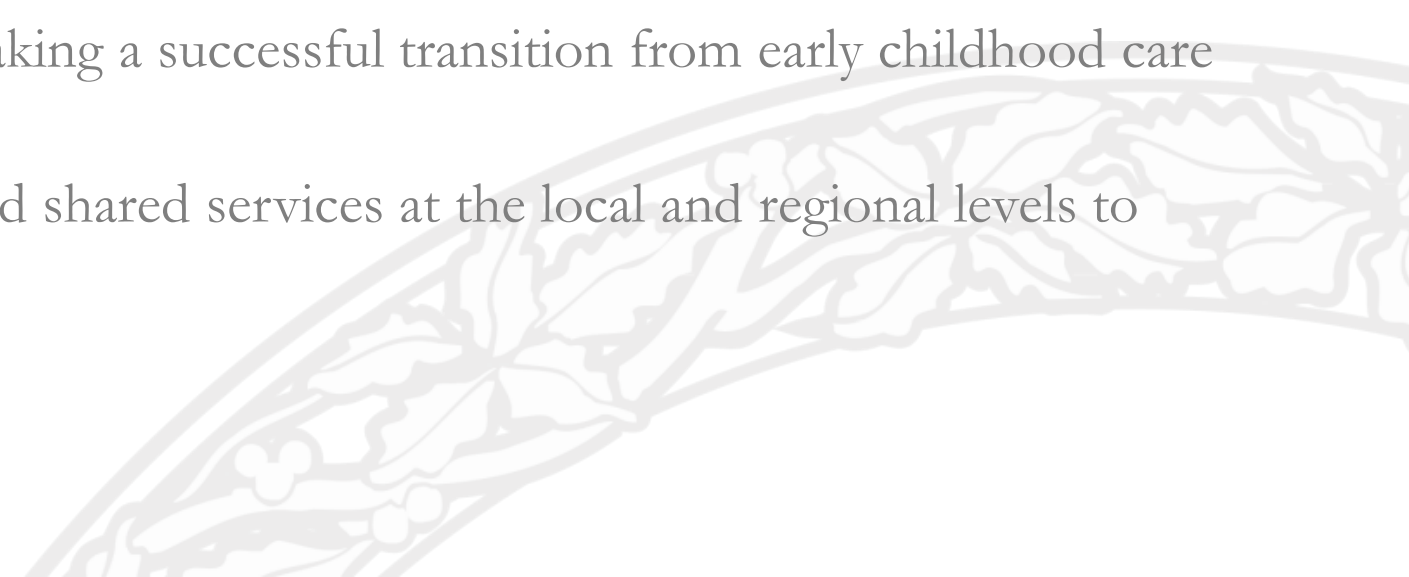
**Align and unify responsibility for establishing standards, coordinating services, and improving outcomes for children age 0-5, in partnership with local communities.**

- 4.1 Unify and align oversight and funding expectations for agencies receiving public early care and education funding.
- 4.2 Streamline health, safety, and quality expectations for providers to reduce barriers and increase efficiency of public early care and education funds.
- 4.3 Simplify and streamline eligibility for parents, guardians, and providers to understand and take advantage of ECCE opportunities for children age birth to five.
- 4.4 Assess and track progress of Virginia's children receiving services across agencies to better understand impact of early childhood care and education programs and services.
- 4.5 Set and sustain annual funding goals for increased investments in early childhood care and education.



## Draft Goal 5: Local Capacity and Innovation

Engage local and regional public and private stakeholders in designing, piloting, and scaling a more accessible and high quality system that meets community needs.

- 5.1 Encourage coordinated and comprehensive approaches to meet statewide quality standards and improve access in communities.
  - 5.2 Design, pilot, and scale innovative public and private partnerships at the local level to maximize state, federal, and local resources and improve program impact.
  - 5.3 Increase the number of families making a successful transition from early childhood care and education to elementary school.
  - 5.4 Support interagency governance and shared services at the local and regional levels to align with the state strategic plan.
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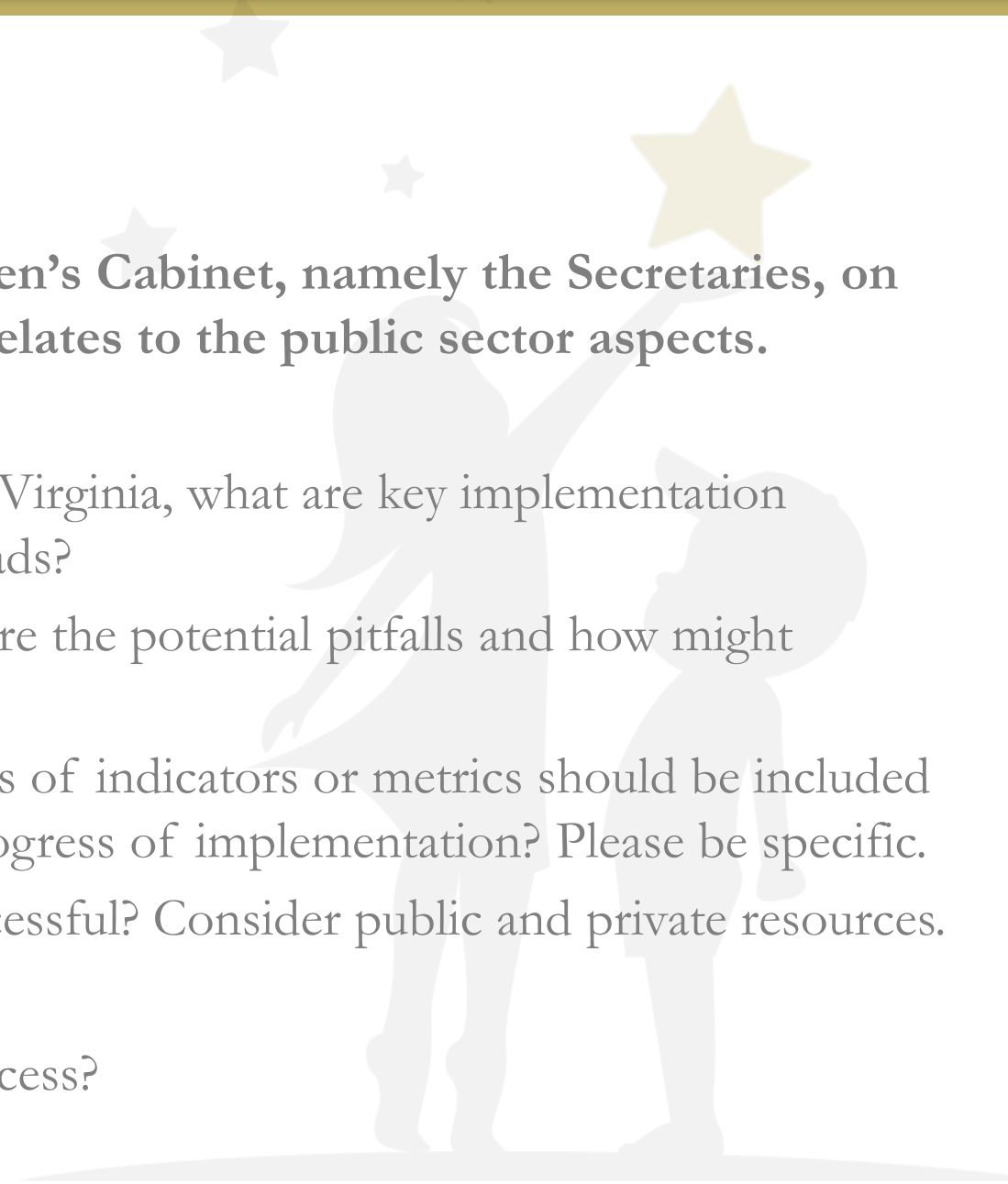


## Implementation Considerations

The charge of this Workgroup is to advise the Children's Cabinet, namely the Secretaries, on how to implement goals and strategies, at least as it relates to the public sector aspects.

- Small Group Questions:

1. Based on your experience on what has worked in Virginia, what are key implementation recommendations for Secretaries and Agency Heads?
2. Based on what has not worked in Virginia, what are the potential pitfalls and how might Virginia avoid these going forward?
3. How should Virginia measure success? What types of indicators or metrics should be included if the state were to use a “dashboard” to track progress of implementation? Please be specific.
4. What resources are needed for Virginia to be successful? Consider public and private resources.
5. What are the critical timeline considerations?
6. What will it take to ensure lasting and durable success?



## Next Steps

- The next Children's Cabinet meeting will be in early September.
- Communitas plans to conduct process to gather online feedback on strategic plan, starting with Impact Workgroup.
- The state plans to conduct in-person sessions next month to learn more about how to better unify the public sector effort, increase access and strengthen quality.

